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Chapter 6 - Religion
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MOUNT VERNON M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH

* This church was built in 1850 and was the first ever built on Knapps Creek. For its erection \$400. was raised by subscription, and the remainder was paid by Andrew W. Moore, Moses Moore and Preston Moore, it was dedicated in June 1852, and the Rev. T. F. McClure became the first pastor. It was a good substantial building and was heated by stoves. During the civil war the soldiers made a barracks of it, and at one time threatened to burn it, but were prevailed upon to desist from such an act of vandalism, and today it stands a monument of the religious zeal and christian enthusiasm of a generation passed away.

Among the first members were Leonard Herring, Jennie Herring, George Rider, Harvey Curry, Mary A. Curry, Moses Moore, Isabella Moore, Preston Moore, Andrew Moore, Anna Moore and Elizabeth Lightner. George Rider was the first class leader and the Rev. L. Fox is the present pastor, (1883).

π Previous to the erection of the Mt. Vernon church the people of upper Knapps Creek attended services at Mt. Zion. Many of them went horseback across the country by the way of Mill Run at I. B. Moore's Store.

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A notable feature of this building is the good quality of the lumber used. Scarcely a defective spot can be seen in the ceiling. John McElwee and son did this carpentry work. All of the lumber was planed by hand at a shop on the land owned by Moses Moore who was a noted christian character.

Records from 1888 to 1900 show the following members, Bertie Gibson, Annie Rider Curry, Lillie Rider, Lucy Rider, Mary Buzzard Grimes, C. P. W. Rider, Brown Moore, Roy Pearis Moore, Grace M. Rider, Dr. G. M. Jordan, Lucy M. Jordan. Forty members is the largest membership the records show for this church.

By 1935 the membership had gotten so small that it was hard for them to meet the financial obligations of the church, therefore when the churches were united this church was discontinued, and is today an abandoned church. The members for 1935 were, Clarence Curry, Annie F. Curry, Bertie Gibson, Dr. G. M. Jordan, Lillie Rider, Lucy Rider, John W. Rider and Minnie Townsend.

If you will compare the names of the earliest members of this church with those found in the Stewards Book you will find that most of them were originally members of old Mt. Zion, and that many of the early meetings were held at the home of the Herrings. This church was first built just as an M. E. Church, but when the Civil War came and all of the hatred of the period flamed forth and people began to join one side or the other, they carried the hatred to the churches as well. The people of Mt. Zion remained with the Union and the people of Knapps Creek joined the Confederacy, therefore the Mt. Vernon church became an M. E. church, South.

I have just talked with John W. Rider, a member of this church, and he says that the Mount Vernon church was built by not only the people of the immediate neighborhood but the people of Mt. Zion and all surrounding communities helped with it so that it would be more convenient for the people of upper Knapps Creek to get to church. It was, at first, a union church and used by everyone regardless of denomination, and he is of the opinion that since no deed seems to have been given until 1871 that it remained a union church until after the Civil War. Also his father, who was one of the trustees in 1871, was very strict about having everything in writing, and it is believed that he was the one that insisted upon having a deed at that time, though the division of the churches may have had something to do with it.

Though it became an M. E. church, South, it was still used by the Presbyterian and any others of the community until it was abandoned four years ago.

When the soldiers encamped in it during the Civil War, they also took their horses in the church, and their hoof marks are still to be seen on the floor. Andrew Herold lived near the church during the war, and the older people have often heard him talk about the soldiers and their horses staying in the church.

Nothing officially has been done about transferring the members to another church, but each one was left to decide for himself where he wanted to take his membership.

This is the oldest Church on Knapps Creek, but its membership has never been as large since Mount Carmel ^{M. E. South} and

Westminister Presbyterian were built on Lower Knapps Creek.

The first deed was given by Thomas Campbell and Susan his wife, John Campbell and Sally his wife, Samuel Campbell and Isabella his wife, Benjamin Campbell and Loure his wife, William Campbell and Mary his wife, Alexander Campbell and Isabell his wife to James Henry Rider, Andrew Moore, Preston Harper, Isaac Moore, and Peter Sharp, trustees. One acre and 25 poles for the use of the M. D. Church, South. (Book 9 page 464)

Then again in 1875 another deed was given by Andrew Herold and Maria his wife to the same trustees, "I do grant unto the said trustees the following tract of land being intended as the Mt. Vernon church lot" and it referres to the deed given by Campbells. Evidently the land had come into the possession of the Herolds and for some reason they found it necessary to give another deed. (Deed Book 12 page 21)

* From - Hardstys Encyclopedia

" - Enid Harper

φ " - Church records



